



E-Learning Across Cultures

Associate Professor Shanton Chang
Dept. of Computing and Information Systems
Melbourne School of Engineering
University of Melbourne
www.unimelb.edu.au

Lightswitch FAIL



天花灯
SMALLPOX



夜灯
NIGHT LIGHT



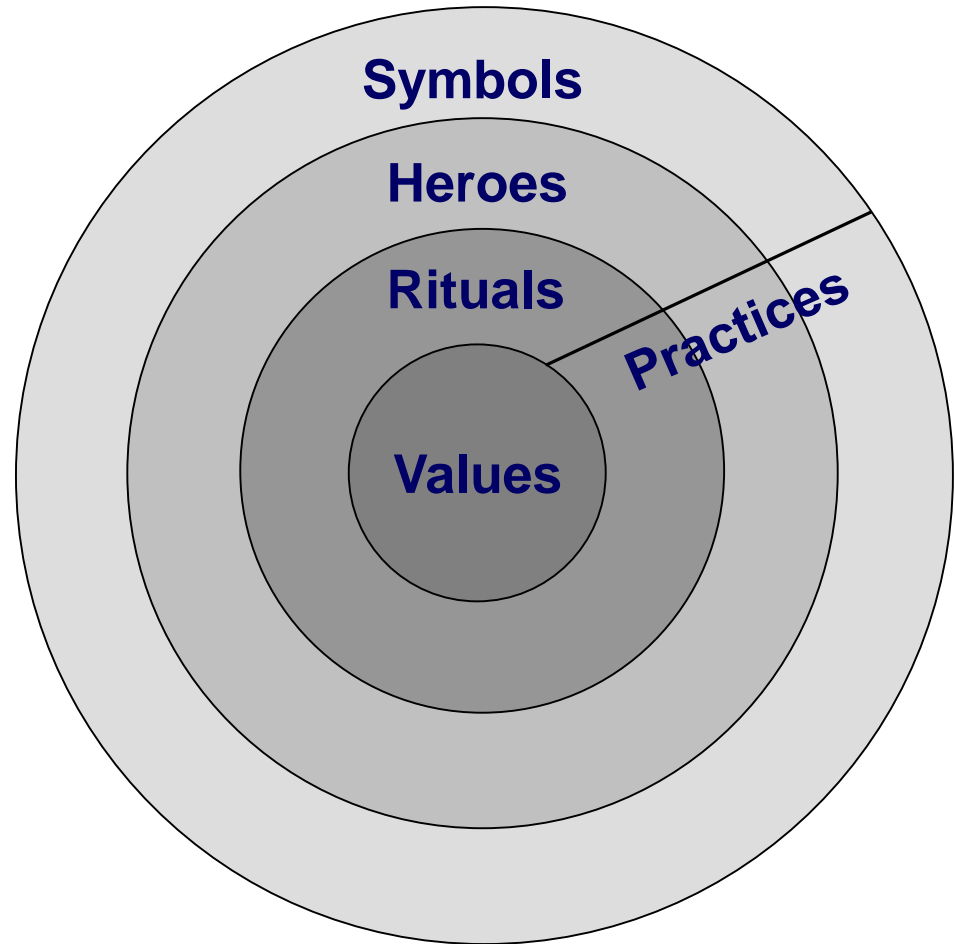
What Concepts / Words
/ Terms in Your
Discipline might lead to a
“Lightswitch Fail”?

What challenges have you
faced both face to face and
online in teaching across
cultures?

What examples of best
practice have you seen?



“...collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one human group from another... Culture in this sense includes systems of values, and values are among the building blocks of culture” (Hofstede, 1997)





High Context vs Low Context

The extent to which communication is implicit and embedded in the context (high) or the extent to which communication is explicit (low).

Power Distance

Relationship to authority and the extent to which people accept the unequal distribution of power. A lower power distance means lower tolerance of inequality in distribution of power.



Individualism vs Collectivism

Reflects the extent to which people prefer to take care of themselves and their immediate families, remaining emotionally independent from groups etc.

Focus of attention differs.

Uncertainty Avoidance

The level to which people prefer predictability and stability. Please note that uncertainty is different to risk. Risk is usually controllable and confined to particular areas. Uncertainty is more generic and unfocused.





Linear - Circular

Direct - Indirect

Intellectual - Relational

Restrained - Expressive



Bundle it all Up and you get a
complex picture

It's a range of styles and
dimensions all “jumbled”
together



What possible Cultural Impacts on Online Learning Behaviours and Interactions might we have to look out for?

Interactions and Communication with Teacher and Peers

Nature of Social Networks and Group Work

Willingness to Post and Style of Post

Commitment of Time

Identity

